

Corato, Italy  
December 2016

# Stevanus News

## 2016 in Review

In May we were able to receive and host a short-term team from Canada/USA. It was a privilege to work with this multi-national group in the area of Naples. They were kind enough to accept two students from Liberty University, one of whom was our son, Dimitri. On this particular day, we handed out flyers in the city of Scampia, which is known as one of the worst neighborhoods in Italy, often nicknamed the *Bronx*. We visit Pastor Salvatore (bottom right) a few times a year in an effort to encourage him and his team as they seek to plant a new church in this community.

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*“To the faithful  
you show yourself  
faithful”*

*Psalm 18:25*

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Often times, especially in the Spring and Summer, we seek to use our outside veranda for group meals. Below is an evening potluck we hosted with our home group. Italians in the city love to come and enjoy an evening under the stars. Mark is known as the grill-master where we enjoy barbequing local meats from our area. As was this evening, it is an opportunity to invite our unsaved friends in seeking to build relationship with them.



## Summer Camp

For over 6 years now, we have been the main organizers of family camp, which involves an extensive youth participation as well. In fact this year, we had 120 in attendance where over 30 were between the ages of 20-30. Our guest speaker, an Argentine missionary to Italy spoke on special encounters that various biblical characters had with God throughout the ages. This week in particular, had a major impact on *all* of us as the beginning of the Italian earthquakes hit while we were sleeping. We were less than 30 miles from the epicenter when we were awoken by shaking beds at 3:30am. We quickly emptied out the building, a youth hostel which belongs to the local community. We were able to continue camp, closing our last night with some powerful decisions before the throne of God. Two months later, this town was hit with tremors and several buildings have collapsed to where the hostel is now being used as a refuge for local citizens.

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*“He reached down  
from on high and  
took hold of me . . .  
he rescued me from  
my powerful enemy,”*

*Psalm 18:16-17*

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## Earthquake-shook



**Denise with some of the women:** Camp gives her opportunities to counsel women of all ages, often those new in the faith as they allow the Lord to not only enter into their lives to save them, but also begin a healing process. These moments are quite precious.



## September Baptisms

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*“He brought me out  
into a spacious  
place; he rescued me  
because he delighted  
in me.”*

*Psalm 18:19*

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For several years now, our church gives opportunity for believers' baptism. Unlike churches in other nations who may baptize children or adolescents, Italian pastors prefer to wait until they are in their late teens or young adults so that each individual comprehends the seriousness of his or her decision to fully follow Christ. In addition to some new believers this past year, several of our young adults decided to publically announce their faith. One of our 19-year olds is from a broken home living with a twice-divorced mom. She feels called to serve the Lord full-time and wants to go to Bible school abroad. Denise is discipling her in English in preparation for college admission.



Here Mark is baptizing Luigi who found the Lord as Savior last year. He comes from a family of Jehovah Witnesses and his parents have also come to faith in Christ. He is now attending our young adult home group which meets weekly in our house.

## Teaching English

For several years now we have had several opportunities to teach English as a second language. With today's changing social and global economy, English certification is a requirement in many fields. As mother-tongue speakers, we are often approached to teach English, conversation as well as grammar, by language schools in an effort to prepare Italian students, ages 14-40 to pass European competency exams. This is an excellent way for us to serve our local community, even share our faith as conversation competencies require dialogue in various areas such as the environment, local customs, and values and ideals. Along with translation and interpreting, this is one way we support ourselves and are thankful for this opportunity.



We take this moment to thank those who have prayed for us and supported us in our ministry here in Italy over this last year. It has been a fruitful year and we have learned the lesson of perseverance in the ministry, that being to continually invest in this next generation of leaders because God has a plan for them. We close with a verse the Lord recently gave us as we met a young couple that may come serve here in a few years:

*“ ... the plans of the Lord stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations.” Psalm 33:11*

In His Service,

**MARK & DENISE**

**STEVANUS**